

REMARKS

This Amendment is in response to the Office Action mailed October 23, 2003. The Examiner's comments in that Office Action have been carefully considered. The applicant respectfully request an extension of time of three months to re-set the due date for response from January 23, 2004, to April 23, 2004. A check in the amount of \$950.00 is enclosed in payment of the three month extension. In the event that this amount is insufficient, please charge any remainder due to our account 10-0100.

The title has been objected to as not being descriptive. The Examiner suggests a title that would be acceptable, and the title has been amended according to the Examiner's suggestion.

Claims 1, 5, 8 and 9 have been rejected as directed to non-statutory subject matter for reasons set forth in paragraph 2, starting at page 2 of the Action. The Examiner has suggested, however, that incorporation of a "computer" or a "computer readable medium" would avoid this rejection. Without commenting on the appropriateness or validity of the rejection and without conceding that the rejection is appropriate, claims 1, 5 and 8 have been amended to introduce new language consistent with the Examiner's suggestion, and claim 9 has been canceled, without prejudice. Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that the rejection addressed to non-statutory subject matter has been overcome.

The Examiner has rejected claims 1-3 and 9-11 under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being fully anticipated by Lin et al. (U.S. Pat. No. 6,282,575 B1). Although the Examiner states that Lin et al. discloses a parallel service provider including an authentication server, Fig. 2 merely shows the operation of authentication server 102, network server 104, routing manager 106, client 198, and

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network router 112. It does not teach a parallel provider that makes a roaming contract with the individual service providers. Therefore it is believed claims 1-2 and 9-11 are patentable over Lin et al.

The Examiner rejects claims 5 and 6 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being fully anticipated by Partridge III (U.S. Pat. No. 5,608,778). Although the Examiner states that Partridge III discloses determining by the access point whether the user is a member of an individual service provider including the access point or a member of a parallel service provider that makes a roaming contract with the plurality of individual service providers (col. 3, lines 18-35), the reference merely shows a transaction for obtaining consumer credit for cellular telephone service. It does not determine whether the user is a member of an individual service provider or a member of a parallel service provider that is connected to the plurality of individual service providers and that makes a roaming contract with the plurality of individual service providers. Therefore, it is believed claims 5 and 6 are patentable over Partridge III.

The Examiner has rejected claim 8 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being fully anticipated by **Wayback Machine**. The reference “Wayback Machine” merely shows search results for January 1, 1996, through October 14, 2003. It does not teach or suggest that an electronic mail address, including a combination of a sub-domain not registered, and a user name is set. According to this reference, it cannot be asserted that hotmail determines whether an electronic mail address including a combination of the user name and any one of a plurality of predetermined sub-domains has been registered. Therefore, we believe that claim 8 is patentable over the reference “Wayback Machine.”

This application has been amended herein to more clearly define its novel features and to more

clearly distinguish over the prior art.

According to one embodiment of the present invention, shown in Fig. 3, in addition to the individual internet service providers ISPs 14A, 14B, 14C, etc., a parallel internet service provider (parallel ISP) 16 has been provided. The parallel ISP 16 is the same as the normal ISPs 14A, 14B, etc., except that it has no access points for connection with the internet. The parallel ISP 16 makes a so-called “roaming contact” with the individual internet service provider ISPs 14A, 14B, 14C, etc. The access points Aps have the function of connection user terminals 50, 52, etc., contracting with the ISPs to the internet 12 and a roaming function of connecting to the user terminals 50, 52, etc., contracting with a parallel internet service provider (parallel ISP) 16 to the internet 12.

As shown in Fig. 5, when an access point (e.g., 20A1) of a selected individual ISP (ISP 14A) is requested by a user terminal (e.g., 50) to connect the user terminal to the access point 20A1 (step S2), it is determined whether or not the user is a member of the parallel ISP (step S6). The request of step S6 contains a connection ID and a password. As the connection ID (account), an electronic mail address – e.g., “KOJIMA@00.PARALLELNET.COM” – including a domain name is used, unlike in the conventional dial-up connection. At step S6 it is determined whether or not the user is a member of the parallel ISP according to whether or not the connection ID includes a suffix (a domain name “PARALLELNET.COM,” in this case).

If the user is not a member of the parallel ISP, the access point authenticates the connection ID (step S8). If the authentication indicates OK, permission is given to the access point 20A1 to connect

the user terminal 50 thereto in step S10, and the connection of the user terminal to the Internet is started and so is accounting by the accounting server 26.

If the user is a member of the parallel ISP, the authentication server 22 transfers a connection request (connection ID and password) to the authentication server 32 of the parallel ISP 16. The authentication server 32 of the parallel ISP 16 authenticates a connection request transferred from each of the individual ISPs 14A, 14B, 14C, etc., and returns an authentication result to it. In step S16, the authentication server 22 of the ISP 14A receives the authentication result. If the result is not good, the processing ends.

If the result is good, permission is given to access point 20A1 to connect the user terminal 50 thereto in step S18, and the connection of the user terminal to the Internet is started. Log data pertaining to user (user, use time, etc.) is recorded in the accounting server 26. If, in step 20, the connection is completed, the use log data is transferred from the accounting server 26 of the ASP 14A to the accounting server 36 of the parallel ISP 16 in step S22, and the processing ends. As described above, the individual ISPs 14A, 14B, 14C, etc., charge not the user but the parallel ISP for the connection fee. The accounting server 36 of the parallel ISP 16 sums up the fees of the individual ISPs 14A, 14B, 14C, etc., charges the users for them, and collects money from the users.

As described above, if a user simply makes a contract with a single parallel provider that is under roaming contract in advance with a plurality of individual providers, the user can connect to the Internet selectively using access points of a number of individual providers. Since the user contracts

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only with the parallel provider, he or she need not manage the whole plurality of accounts or the whole plurality of e-mail addresses but can handle the e-mail in a unified manner. In order to avoid duplicate user names in determining an electronic mail address, a number of sub-domain names are prepared and one of them can be added to a domain name. In most cases, a user can have an electronic mail address including a user name that the user wishes.

In view of the amendments to the claims and the above comments, it is believed that the application is now in condition for allowance. Early allowance and issuance is, accordingly, respectfully solicited.

Applicant hereby petitions that any and all extensions of time of the term necessary to render this response timely be granted. COSTS FOR SUCH EXTENSION(S) AND/OR ANY OTHER FEE DUE WITH THIS FEE DUE WITH THIS PAPER THAT ARE NOT FULLY COVERED BY AN ENCLOSED CHECK MAY BE CHARGED TO DEPOSIT ACCOUNT #10-0100.

Date: April 23, 2004

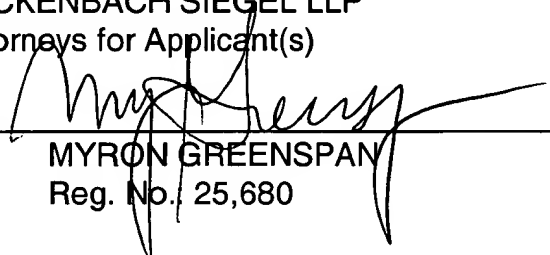
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I hereby certify that this correspondence is being filed by depositing same in an envelope stamped first-class mail, addressed to the Commissioner of Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450, in a duly marked U.S. Postal Service drop box, with appropriate postage, on the following date:


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